

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 PM-03 NSC-07 NSCE-00 PRS-01 SAM-01

EB-03 CIEP-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 OMB-01 /058 W

----- 121289

R 251704Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1144

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18112

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: LUNCH WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE JEAN LECANUET

1. SUMMARY: AT A SMALL LUNCHEON ON JULY 22
ATTENDED BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE JEAN LECANUET, HIS
STAFF AIDE, TWO MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY STAFF AND
MYSELF, THE MINISTER DISCUSSED U.S-FRENCH RELATIONS
AND DOMESTIC FRENCH POLITICS. LECANUET SAID HE
INTENDS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH INTERIOR MINISTER
PONIATOWSKI TO CREATE A "GISCARDIAN" PARLIAMENTARY
MAJORITY. WHEN THIS IS ACHIEVED, HE ADDED, SUB-
STANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS
AND PROGRESS TOWARDS EC POLITICAL UNIFICATION
WILL BE POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE U.S. AND EUROPE: IN RESPONSE TO MY EXPRES-
SION OF GRATITUDE TO LECANUET FOR HIS UNSWERVING
FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS THE U.S. DURING THE PAST L5
YEARS, THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS
REMAIN A CHAMPION OF A STRONG ATLANTIC ALLIANCE,
BUT, HE ADDED, HE WOULD BE GIVING HIGHEST PRIORITY
IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE TO THE UNIFICATION OF
EUROPE SPEAKING AS A FRIEND OF THE U.S., HE
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CONTINUED, HE WANTED TO BE FRANK IN LETTING US

KNOW THAT MANY FRENCHMEN WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARDS A UNITED EUROPE. HE SAID THAT CERTAIN STATEMENTS BY SECRETARY KISSINGER AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS COULD BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THE USG IS COMFORTABLE WITH EUROPE'S CURRENT DIVISIONS AND WILL DO NOTHING TO PROMOTE A STRONG UNIFIED EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HE QUICKLY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT "EUROPE CANNOT BE UNITED FROM THE OUTSIDE". I REPLIED THAT EUROPE'S SUSPICIONS WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION, THAT BOTH PRESIDENT NIXON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER FIRMLY BELIEVED IN AND CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE UNIFICATION OF EUROPE. PARTNERSHIP WITH A STRONG UNITED EUROPE IS THE BEDROCK OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

3. LECANUET SAID HE APPRECIATED THESE ASSURANCES. HE ADDED THAT HE SAW LITTLE HOPE FOR MUCH PROGRESS TOWARDS EUROPEAN UNIFICATION UNTIL THE BRITISH AND ITALIANS RESOLVE THEIR INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS FACING ALL COMMUNITY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING FRANCE, ARE ECONOMIC AND THE EMPHASIS OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR 18 MONTHS MUST BE ON CONTAINING INFLATION WITHOUT CAUSING ECONOMIC DISLOCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

4. ON DOMESTIC POLITICS LECANUET WAS UNUSUALLY FRANK. HE SAID UDR INFLUENCE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE TO BE LIQUIDATED BEFORE A SOLID "GISCARDIAN" MAJORITY COULD BE CREATED. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER UDR DEPUTIES MIGHT RALLY TO GISCARD AND GIVE HIM THEIR UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT, LECANUET ASKED RHETORICALLY, "CAN A BUDDHIST BECOME A CHRISTIAN?" HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE BELIEVES NEW LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WILL BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A GISCARDIAN MAJORITY; ELECTIONS MAY BE HELD IN 18 MONTHS TO TWO YEARS, DEPENDING ON THE SUCCESS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC POLICY, HE ADDED. IF THE ECONOMY IS IN GOOD SHAPE, LECANUET SAID, A NEW MAJORITY WOULD EMERGE FROM LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WHICH WOULD

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SPAN THE CENTER LEFT, CENTRE AND CENTER RIGHT, LEAVING ONLY HARDCORE GAULLISTS AND THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COALITION IN THE OPPOSITION. HE THOUGHT THAT EVENTUALLY SOME SOCIALISTS WOULD RALLY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND REFERRED TO MME. FRANCOISE GIRAUD'S ENTRY INTO THE GOVERNMENT (SEE PARIS 17561) AS AN INDICATION OF HOW BRIDGES COULD BE BUILT TO THE MODERATE LEFT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 18112

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5. LECANUET ADDED THAT THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT IS TO BLOCK MICHEL JOBERT'S EFFORTS TO BUILD A CENTER-LEFT POLITICAL MOVEMENT. HE SAID IN SPITE OF SKEPTICISM WITHIN PARIS POLITICAL CIRCLES ABOUT JOBERT'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY, HE BELIEVED JOBERT MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IN HIS VIEW JOBERT IS TRYING TO CARVE OUT A STRATEGIC POSITION BY APPEALING TO THE NATIONALISM, ANTI-AMERICANISM AND RADICALISM OF A SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL SEGMENT OF THE FRENCH PUBLIC. JOBERT'S "LITTLE GAME" NOW IS TO PLAY THIS CARD TO UNITE ELEMENTS OF THE UDR AND THE SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST COALITION IN AN EFFORT TO FORCE AN ELECTION THROUGH WHICH JOBERT WOULD HOPE TO OBTAIN A NEW PLATFORM TO ESPOUSE HIS PHILOSOPHY. LECANUET SAID HE IS PERSONALLY ATTEMPTING TO COUNTER JOBERT BY OCCUPYING AS MUCH OF THE CENTER-LEFT AS POSSIBLE. HE ADDED THAT HIS PARTY (CENTER DEMOCRATIC) WOULD MAINTAIN A SEPARATE IDENTITY BUT WOULD EVENTUALLY JOIN A CONFEDERATION OF OTHER CENTER PARTIES, INCLUDING GISCARD'S INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS AND FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER FONTANET'S CENTER UNION PARTY. FINALLY, ON DOMESTIC POLITICS, LECANUET

SAID HE DID NOT FORESEE A MAJOR RESHUFFLING OF
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THE GOVERNMENT BEFORE 18 MONTHS OR TWO YEARS.
IRWIN

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